

Imaginaries and Socio-Economic Status

To sum up the exhibition, we may ask ourselves how we treated and peceived them. Most of them lived quiet lives, having melted completely into Scandinavian culture. Those resisting this acculturation were more often reluctant to the procedures and opinions about adoption. More and more information about their activities is becoming accessible to us. It may appear that they formed the general opinion, as they were the most outspoken and active agents, but by numbers, they were a minority voice among them. The reason for this seems to be that the majority didn't wish to address their background or stand out.

It was believed that Scandinavia was an exceptionally good place for them to arrive to as we could care for them and regarded ourselves as being particularly tolerant and non-oppressive. Yet, it seems that many, when reaching adulthood and moving away from their protective environments, having grown up with their adoptive parents, often in small, provincial communities, forced them to face with society's expectations and sometimes prejudices as well as their own feelings of detachment and displacement.

Many questions remain un-resolved. However, we can rely on the increasing adoption research that took place in Sweden since around the mid 1990s, which was based on national cohort studies of thousands of adult international adoptees. Here, indications were that international adoption was not as unproblematic and idyllic as it was generally perceived to be. These Swedish adoption studies, by far the most extensive ever conducted on international adoptees in any Western country, can also be seen as the most scientific ones up to date of assessing the outcomes of international adoption. The results show that international adoptees in Sweden compared to equivalent control groups have substantial problems establishing themselves socio-economically in terms of:

- Level of education,
- Labor market achievement
- Creating a family in spite of being adopted by couples predominantly belonging to the Swedish elite*

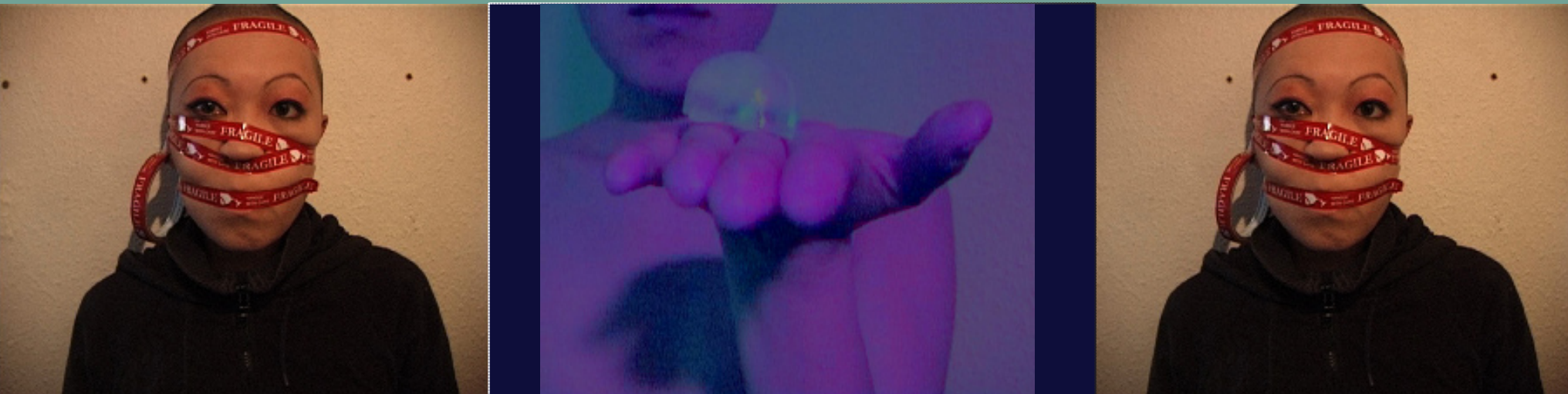
*It is estimated that 90 percent of the adoptive parents belong to Sweden's upper and middle classes



Imaginaries

Regarding their personal lives and thoughts there were of course large individual variations so we can only guess. This reconstructed room contains the basic interior of their style of living, original photos and personal documents and memoirs that they seemed to value and identify with.

In general, they integrated unusually well. In many cases, only their skin revealed their origin as everything from their names, citizenships, adoptive families, religion, culture, language, and even gestures and opinions were completely Scandinavian. Sometimes they even seemed to misunderstand or repress the fact that they were not Scandinavian by origin.



... using a combination of Judith Butler's performativity theory and Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity as the theoretical background, the paper argues that the adopted Korean existence is characterized by painful and contradictory subjectivities and identifications, unstable and repeated passings and transgressions, and a never-ending negotiation and navigation between Whiteness, Orientalism, Immigrantism, Koreanness and Asian-ness making it different from other Korean and Asian immigrant and minority diasporas and communities, and being in no way neither self-chosen nor very pleasant to live in, thereby also going against the general celebratory hype of performativity and hybridity in postmodern writing.

Source: Tobias Hübinette "Disembedded and free-floating bodies out-of-place and out-of-control: Examining the borderline existence of adopted Koreans"



Examples of socio-economic status of international adoptees compared to Ethnic Swedes		
	International Adoptees	Ethnic Swedes
Post-second-ary education of three years	6.6 %	20.0 %
Unemployment	39.8 %	22.9 %
Belonging to the lowest income category in Sweden	50.0 %	28.6 %
Married or co-habitants	29.2 %	56.2 %

International adoptees less often had children, and those who became parents were more often living without their children if they were males, or as single parents if they were females. Furthermore, epidemiological studies show high levels of psychiatric illness, addiction, criminality and suicide compared to the control groups

For the years 1986-95, the odds ratio for:
Psychiatric hospital care 3.2 times higher than Ethnic Swedes
Treatment for alcohol abuse 2.6 times higher than Ethnic Swedes
Drug abuse 5.2 times higher than Ethnic Swedes
Severe criminality leading to imprisonment 2.6 times higher than Ethnic Swedes
Suicide attempt: 3.6. times higher than Ethnic Swede
*Suicide: 5.0 times higher than ethnic Swedes

*Moreover, international adoptees were found to have used more violent suicide methods compared to the majority population of Sweden. In an international perspective, this is only comparable to the staggering suicide rates registered among indigenous people in America and Australia with, for example, a suicide rate exceeding the national rate by four times for American Indian children adopted into white families.

Source: Hjern, 2004; Hjern & Allebeck, 2004; Hjern, Lindblad & Vinnerljung, 2003; Hjern, Vinnerljung & Lindblad, 2004

10)
The mythological context:

The Korean creation myth and how the Bear cult links the Northern Polar Hemisphere.

11)
A Historical Parallel about displacement.

The story about Minik, an Eskimo transported from Greenland to be displayed at an exhibition at the Museum of Natural History in New York and later adopted.

9)
The personal story

An example of their imaginaries and how they often compared and related their personal stories to myths and fairytales as to fill in the gaps in their histories.

Not only to us, do they appear mythical, as they entered in and out of our culture, with us hardly noticing their differences, yet leaving numerous traces about their presence.

Also, it seems, they created a lot of personal histories and mythologies around their lives in their attempt to create a sense of continuity and place.